

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3045

INFO USMISSION UN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 172

EO 11652: XGDS,1

TAGS: PFOR, ML, UN

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH OUMAR MAKALOU

U.S.-MALIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: OUMAR MAKALOU, DIRECTOR OF CABINET TO THE PRESIDENT, BROADLY HINTED TO ME THAT HE IS BEING CONSIDERED AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. TO REPLACE BOUBACAR KANTE. HE SAID MALIAN GOVERNMENT IS VERY UNAHPPY OVER KANTE'S PERFORMANCE AT THE U.N. AND THAT A POLICY DECISION HAS BEEN MADE THAT THE REESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. IS MALI'S NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. HE ALSO SAID THAT MALI'S POLICIES WILL, AS STATED IN THE PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS, BE GUIDED BY PRAGMATISM RATHER THAN IDEOLOGY. END SUMMARY.

1. YESTERDAY OUMAR MAKALOU, DIRECTOR OF CABINET TO THE PRESIDENT, BROUGHT A VISITOR TO MY OFFICE. MAKALOU STAYED ONLY A FEW MOMENTS SAYING THAT HE HAD TO GO AWAY. I ASKED HIM IF HE WAS GOING ON A TRIP. HIS REACTION STARTLED ME BECAUSE HE SAID, WHY DID I THINK HE WAS GOING ON A TRIP. I PASSED THAT OFF.

2. LAST NIGHT AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION MAKALOU SOUGHT ME OUT AND AGAIN ASKED ME WHAT I HAD HEARD THAT MADE ME

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BELIEVE HE WAS GOING ON A TRIP. I SAID THAT I HAD NOT

HEARD ANYTHING, THAT I HAD MISUNDERSTOOD WHAT HE HAD SAID. MAKALOU SAID THERE WERE LOTS OF RUMORS IN BAMAKO THAT HE WAS TO BE GIVEN AN EMBASSY. I TRUTHFULLY SAID I HAD NOT HEARD THESE RUMORS, BUT WHERE WAS HE GOING IN MOST UN-MALIAN FASHION, MAKALOU BECAME VERY COY AND SAID THAT SOMEONE HAD MENTIONED TO HIM THE POSSIBILITY OF GOING TO THE SOVIET UNION, BUT HE HAD SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK HE WOULD MAKE A VERY GOOD AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION, AND, ANYWAY, MALI HAD JUST SENT AN AMBASSADOR THERE. I REPLIED THAT CERTAINLY IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO BE AN AMBASSADOR SOMEWHERE. MAKALOU SAID WHAT DID I MEAN BY SOMEWHERE. I SAID HOW ABOUT THE U.S., BUT THAT, OF COURSE, MALI HAD JUST SENT A NEW AMBASSADOR THERE. THAT WAS THE COMMENT MAKALOU WAS WAITING FOR. HE REPLIED, YES, THEY HAD SENT AN AMBASSADOR THERE, BUT HE HAD BEEN THERE TOO LONG AND HAD MADE TOO MANY MISTAKES (IL A FAIT TROP DE BETISES). I SAID THAT WE HAD BEEN UNHAPPY ABOUT KANTE'S PERFORMANCE AT THE U.N. AND THAT AS HE, MAKALOU, KNEW, I HAD MADE SEVERAL DEMARCHES TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE ABOUT IT. MAKALOU SAID, OF COURSE, HE KNEW ABOUT IT, THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY LAST DEMARCHE THE PRESIDENT HAD INSTRUCTED BABA DIARRA (VP OF MILITARY COMMITTEE) TO CALL ME IN TO DELIVER THE MALIAN GOVERNMENT'S APOLOGY (75 BAMAKO 4614). MAKALOU CONTINUED THAT THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY FOR MALI HAD TO BE THE REESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE CLOSEST RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THAT THE COMMITTEE AGREED. HE SAID QTE LET THEM CALL ME PRO-WEST OR PRO-AMERICAN, I AM NEITHER, I AM MALIAN. END QTE. HE SAID THE PRESIDENT AGREED THAT IDEOLOGY WAS FINE BUT THAT MALI HAD TO RECOGNIZE ECONOMIC REALITIES AND THAT IT WAS ONLY THE U.S. WHICH COULD PROVIDE THE TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE THAT WOULD RESCUE MALI FROM ITS PRESENT DISASTROUS ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE SAID THAT, OF COURSE, MALI HAD CLOSE ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH, BUT THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE THE TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW-HOW THAT WAS REQUIRED. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ANGOLA WAS AN AFRICAN PROBLEM AND THAT MALI RIGHTFULLY WOULD TAKE STRONG POSITIONS ON SUCH

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MATTERS, WHICH HE WAS SURE WE UNDERSTOOD. ON NORTH KOREA, HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE IN FAVOR OF REUNIFICATION, AND PUERTO RICO, THEY RECOGNIZED THAT THESE WERE NOT MATTERS OF INTEREST TO MALI. HE THEN SAID THAT THIS APPROACH BY MALI WAS WHAT PRESIDENT TRAORE HAD MEANT IN HIS NEW YEAR'S DAY MESSAGE WHEN HE REJECTED IDEOLOGY AND ADOPTED PRAGMATISM AS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR MALI (BAMAKO 34).

COMMENT: MAKALOU IS VERY CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT AND, IN FACT, FUNCTIONS AS CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. WE HAVE FOUND HIM TO BE REMARKABLY LEVEL-HEADED, INTELLIGENT AND WELL INFORMED. HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL TO THE EMBASSY, BUT WE HAD NOT CONSIDERED HIM TO BE PARTICULARLY IDENTIFIED WITH ANY PRO-WESTERN FACTION THAT MAY EXIST IN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. HIS COMMENTS, HOWEVER, COMBINED WITH THOSE WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHER SOURCES, CLEARLY INDICATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MALI IS VERY UNHAPPY WITH BOUBAKAR KANTE'S PERFORMANCE IN THE U.N. THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SHAKEN BY THE FIRMNESS OF OUR RESPONSE, AND WE HAVE REASON NOW TO HOPE THAT THE MALIAN POSITION IN THE U.N. ON SOME ISSUES OF VITAL INTEREST TO US WILL BE MODIFIED. OF COURSE, WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE ACTUAL VOTES TO SEE WHETHER MALIAN POLICY HAS IN FACT CHANGED. IF MAKALOU IS NAMED AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. AND/OR THE U.N., THE GOVERNMENT OF MALI WILL HAVE MADE AN EXCELLENT CHOICE. END COMMENT.

3. THE FOREGOING MUST BE CLOSELY HELD AND NOT DISCUSSED WITH ANY FOREIGN OFFICIALS.

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